

Game of Hearts

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Summary: There is no deep meaning to this story; it is a PWP. The gang plays a card game. Please, no flames.

Game of Hearts

Author's Note: This is a PWP. There is no deep meaning and no plot. It's not even particularly funny. This is what happens when I feel the need to write and inspiration has fled screaming from the building. I got the idea of Harry, Ron, Hermione, and Malfoy all sitting at a table playing hearts, and the result is below. I apologize for Harry's tiny part, but I really don't think I write him that well. In fact, this isn't a very good story. As far as I know, there will be no further parts and no sequel except possibly a different card game under different circumstances should inspiration continue to evade capture. Please, please, please no flames. I already know the story's bad. At least they're not playing Go Fish.

Disclaimer: None of these characters belong to me, they all belong to the great and wonderful JK Rowling. Yadda yadda yadda legal disclaimer stuff that I probably forgot.

Game of Hearts

The Muggle Studies classroom was more packed than usual one afternoon. Aside from the usual mass of students firmly convinced that Muggle Studies was an easy high mark, there was an entirely separate class in attendance that day.

Professor Snape had apparently caught a flu of some kind (although whispers flicked around the classroom saying Fred and George had outdone themselves this time) and all his lessons that day had been cancelled. His students had been ordered to report to Muggle Studies instead, since it was a large enough classroom to accommodate them all. Even the current group of Potions refugees didn't particularly strain the room size, in spite of the fact that it was a double class of Slytherins and Gryffindors.

This influx of students had put the Muggle Studies professor into something of a panic. There were too many students to teach effectively, but they couldn't just be given a free period. They'd run amok, it would be worse than a swarm of Cornish pixies after they'd been given coffee. The professor's solution was simple: he sorted the students randomly into groups and told them to go play quiet games, like cards or Monopoly. Then he watched them and broke up budding arguments with oppressive cheerfulness and the threat of detention.

The Muggle Studies students were thrilled about this (except the part about detention), as were most of the Potions refugees, and most of them settled down to serious games of poker or heated real estate duels.

One table was engaged in an argument. Hermione Granger shuffled the deck of cards for the seventeenth time. "I won't play poker," she said. "I hate that game."

Ron Weasley and Harry Potter gave her synchronous pitying looks. "It's because you're bad at it, isn't it, Hermione?" asked Ron.

"It's not," she said sharply. "I just don't like it." She shuffled the cards again. "I know! There's four of us. We could play hearts."

The fourth member of the table looked away from the ceiling and directed an icy glare at Hermione. "Have I mentioned that I'd rather chew broken glass than play infantile card games with any of you?" Draco Malfoy drawled.

Ron perked up. "All right, Hermione. Let's play hearts." He paused, then blinked and frowned. "How do you play hearts?"

"It's easy," she said, shuffling the cards. "Always follow suit, highest card takes. Hearts are worth one point each and the Queen of Spades is worth thirteen. The object is not to get points." At Ron's confused expression, she added, "The best way to learn is to play."

Harry shrugged. He really didn't care what game was played, as long as something was. Watching Hermione shuffle the cards had lost its appeal ten shuffles ago. "Whatever we're playing, if you shuffle those cards any more, they'll go back in order. Deal."

"I won't play," Malfoy stated flatly.

"You will," Harry answered, just as flatly, while Hermione launched into an explanation of the rules of the game for the benefit of Ron.

"I won't."

"You will."

"Make me." The pale boy crossed his arms in attempt to look forbidding, which fell considerably short and landed in the realm of pouty.

"You heard the Professor. It's game or detention."

"... I'll play." From his expression, Malfoy really would have preferred to chew broken glass. "Deal, Granger. Let's get this over with."

She glared, but began dealing out the cards. As soon as she was done, she picked hers up and began sorting them. Harry and Malfoy did the same, except Malfoy didn't appear to sort his. Ron picked his up and studied them intently.

Harry picked three cards and passed them to Hermione. Hermione passed to Ron, who passed (after being kicked solidly in the shins by Hermione) to Malfoy.

Play started with Harry tossing out the two of clubs. Ron played a ten, Malfoy had apparently passed all his clubs to Harry and played the ace of diamonds, and Hermione took with the ace of clubs. She led the ten of spades.

Harry ducked under the ten by playing the nine, and Ron triumphantly threw out the Queen. "There. Glad to get that thing out of my hand. It's too high."

Hermione choked. "You did hear me explaining that you don't want to take points, didn't you?"

"Yeah, why?"

"That card's worth thirteen."

"... I thought the thirteen pointer was the queen of diamonds."

She looked exasperated. "How can you mistake spades for diamonds? They sound nothing alike!"

"Well, I wasn't paying attention."

Malfoy frowned and kicked Ron under the table. "I hate you." He played out the ace of spades.

Ron brightened. "Hey, cool. I don't get the points after all."

Play continued for a few more tricks without hearts being broken. Ron picked up the game quickly, especially with Harry's and Hermione's occasional help. The only person who slowed down the game was Malfoy, who either preferred to play ultraconservatively or simply didn't know how to play and was faking it.

It was at one point when he was supposed to lead that play stopped completely. The Slytherin boy appeared to be considering his options, until finally he led the nine of hearts.

"You can't do that," Hermione said automatically, as she had when Ron had tried to lead a heart.

"Yes, I can."

"No, you can't. Hearts haven't been broken yet."

"They are now."

"You can only lead hearts if you've got nothing else!"

"Just play, Granger," he snapped. "I led, now follow."

"No. There are rules."

With a long-suffering sigh, Malfoy passed her his hand. "There. Are you satisfied?"

She looked, then blinked and passed the cards back. "...Oh," was all she said as she played the four. "Sorry."

"Spare me." Malfoy took the trick and led hearts again. He took all the remaining tricks, and once everyone was out of cards, Ron burst out laughing.

"You've got all the points, and the rest of us haven't got any!" he crowed happily.

Hermione bit her lip. "That's not... quite true. He has all the point cards, but we get the points."

Ron blinked. "What?"

"It's called shooting the moon," Harry explained. "If someone gets all the point cards, their total for the hand is zero and everyone else gets twenty-six points."

Ron scowled and glared at Malfoy, who shrugged and went back to staring at the ceiling. Hermione picked up the cards and started shuffling them again. For a moment, the table was silent except for the rapid swish-click of shuffling cards and the low rumble of noise from other tables. "So what next?" Harry asked finally.

"We play to one hundred," Hermione replied complacently, starting her fifth shuffle.

"You're joking," Ron told her disgustedly. "That could take forever. I won't do it."

Without looking down from the ceiling, Malfoy drawled, "It's because you're bad at it, isn't it, Weasley?"

"Shut up, Malfoy!"

Hermione started her seventh shuffle, saying, "Come on, it'll go quickly, Ron. We all know how to play now...."

Harry rolled his eyes and got out parchment, quill, and ink to use as a scoresheet

Around the room, brisk trade was being done for strips of brightly-colored paper and bets were being placed in the amounts of pebbles and shoelaces. Except for at one table, which was once again engaged in an argument.

End
file.